

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Military Build-up and Possible Action in Europe

This memorandum is in response to your memorandum dated 8 September 1961 in which you ask ten questions on the build-up and deployment of non-nuclear forces.

We believe that further mobilization and deployment actions should be taken at this time in order to convey to the USSR and to our Allies a firm determination and resolve to defend our interests in Berlin and to remedy the unfavorable balance of ground forces in and readily deployable to Central Europe. We propose the early deployment of at least one additional U. S. division to Europe; others may be sent later. In order that we can be assured of having an adequate strategic reserve in the coming months, we recommend that 4 National Guard Divisions be called to active duty at this time.

Taken in conjunction with other measures now underway, these additional actions should reduce the likelihood that our position in Berlin will be challenged; our negotiating position would be strengthened; and, if open conflict nonetheless occurs, our capability for waging it without resort to nuclear warfare would be substantially increased.

QUESTION 1:

What will the presence in Europe of 6 additional U. S. divisions accomplish

- a. In meeting the Berlin situation?
- b. In vitalizing NATO and strengthening the long-term defense of Western Europe?

ANSWER:


Six additional U. S. divisions, temporarily deployed in Europe, would achieve important political and military objectives. Specifically, the presence in Europe of 6 additional U. S. divisions would:

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a. Clearly show that the U. S. regards its Berlin interests most seriously and is taking the lead in responding to the Soviet challenge.

1.3 (a)(5)


c. Add substantially (about 35% in effective fighting strength), to NATO's ground strength in the Central Region. (See Question 3.)

d. Strengthen the alternatives between inaction and nuclear war.

e. Put us in a stronger position to engage in negotiations.

1.3 (a)(1)

1.3 (a)(5)


Additionally, it would guard against a possible Soviet seizure of some territory in the west, e.g., Hamburg, possibly in response to an Allied naval blockade, limited air attack, or ground probe.

1.3 (a)(1)

Reinforcement of NATO's non-nuclear capability would serve to broaden the choice of response, depending on the nature of the attack and the circumstances prevailing at the time.

1.3 (a)(1)


1.3 (a)(5)

1.3 (a)(2)

[REDACTED]

The Allied response to our build-up and exhortations that they do likewise has been fair. Substantial progress is being made toward the goals we set forth in our August 8 proposal. [REDACTED]

1.3 (a)(1)

More vigorous actions can be taken, especially by the Germans after September 17. Further build-up by the U. S. will make it less difficult for the Germans to call on their people for a greater effort.

The need for a long term build-up of the non-nuclear defense of Europe has been clearly recognized by the U. S. government. It is not clear, however, at this time what the scale and composition of the U. S. contribution to the direct defense of Europe should be over the long term.

1.3 (a)(5)

[REDACTED]

QUESTION 2:

Will an increase in our conventional forces in Europe convince Khrushchev of our readiness to fight to a finish over Berlin, or will it have the opposite effect? What other steps of all kinds may help to carry conviction on this point?

ANSWER:

Inevitably it must be quite uncertain what would convince Khrushchev of our willingness to fight to a finish over Berlin. While a conventional build-up alone would be unlikely to convince him, the absence of a build-up would probably increase his doubt of our determination. To continue efforts focused mostly on nuclear forces and nuclear threats would carry less conviction than building up both non-nuclear and nuclear forces.

1.3 (a)(5)

[REDACTED]

1.3 (a)(1)

1.3 (a)(5)

[REDACTED]

Finally, the non-nuclear program proposed to NATO by the U. S. provides for a greatly strengthened defense of Western Europe.

1.3 (a)(2)

much better position to engage in limited ground, air, and naval action over Berlin with attendant dangers of the escalation which Khrushchev almost certainly wants to avoid. It makes it apparent that the U. S. is in Europe to stay regardless of the scale or intensity of any Soviet pressure or action. In this regard, deployment of forces toward the north of Germany increases our capabilities in an area where NATO is extremely weak and where the main effort of any initial USSR ground offensive would likely occur. In our judgment, Khrushchev will assess this build-up policy as significantly strengthening his opposition over Berlin.

1.3 (a)(1)

[REDACTED]

1.3 (a)(1)



1.3 (a)(1)

1.3 (a)(4)





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1-3(a)(1)
1-3(a)(2)



1.3(a)(1)
1.3(a)(2)

QUESTION 4:

It has been my understanding that we would need to call additional divisions only as we actually decided to send existing divisions to Europe. Since our current plan is to send only one such division, why is it necessary now to call 4 divisions from the Reserve?

ANSWER:

Developments over Berlin and elsewhere in the world make it prudent for us to seriously consider sending 6 divisions to Europe. We propose that one division be sent within the next 6 weeks. In the event the six are sent, we would be left with inadequate reserves in the U. S. In addition, a further deterioration of the Berlin situation would have world-wide implications, for U. S. force requirements. It would be improvident of us to contemplate denuding the U. S. of combat ready forces

Consequently, in our judgment the 4 National Guard divisions should be called up at this time, rather than after the deployment of available units.

[REDACTED]

QUESTION 5:

If we call up four additional National Guard divisions now and do not send them to Europe, how can they be usefully employed? How long would it take to convert them to Army of the U. S. divisions? How long would it take to create effective A.U.S. divisions by other means?

ANSWER:

If from 4 to 6 Army divisions are sent to Europe, the 4 additional National Guard divisions will constitute the bulk of our strategic reserve available for further reinforcing Europe or for other contingencies throughout the world.

If it is not deemed necessary to send extra divisions to Europe, these divisions would be occupied in a training program. After about 4 months we would then have 10 Army and 2 Marine Corps combat ready divisions in the U. S. available for deployment. This 12 division force would not only increase the level of our non-nuclear capability, it would enable us to move forces to, or near, potential trouble spots at an early stage with less danger of having our forces maldeployed.

After demobilization, the 4 Guard divisions and their supporting units, a total of approximately 150,000 men, would be maintained in reserve status at full strength and a high level of training, thereby increasing our combat readiness above present levels.

It would take from 6 to 12 months to convert these divisions to Army of the U. S. status. The exact time would depend on the availability of trained replacements and the degree of combat readiness maintained during conversion.

Formation of new combat ready divisions by using a partially regular and partially reserve cadre and untrained fillers would take about 9 months.

QUESTION 6:

How much of the 4 division build-up would be justified in view of the over-all world situation if Berlin were not an immediate issue?

ANSWER:

If Berlin were not an immediate issue there would be substantially less justification for calling up the 4 National Guard divisions. There would remain, nevertheless, a good

[REDACTED]

case for strengthening the combat readiness of our ground forces. This conclusion is based on the view that:

[REDACTED]

1.3(a)(2)

b. The Communist Bloc is challenging us world-wide -- most directly, apart from Europe, in Southeast Asia;

c. It is both important and feasible for the U. S. and its Allies to defend the majority of the threatened areas; the ability to do so will probably help to deter overt aggression against them.

The conversion of the 3 STRAF divisions to STRAC status gives us 8 combat ready divisions in the U. S. readily available for deployment. This is a sizeable force.

[REDACTED]

1.3(a)(2)

QUESTION 7:

What tactical air support is needed for the planned forces in Europe and what is the plan for providing such support?

ANSWER:

1.3(a)(1) (2)

[REDACTED]

1.3 (a) (1) & (-)

QUESTION 8:

The reduction in terms of days of combat of the supply backup of U. S. forces in Europe which will result from increasing our forces and from supplying the West Germans has been noted. Would this result in putting U. S. troops in a possible combat situation without adequate supplies?

ANSWER:

1.3 (a) (2)

QUESTION 9:

If we add six divisions to NATO, may not Khrushchev add six or more divisions to the conventional forces facing NATO? Or will logistical problems, fear of attack by atomic weapons and preoccupations in the Satellites set a limit on the Soviet conventional forces available for immediate use against NATO?

ANSWER:

Yes. He may add divisions at any time. He could increase his strength in Eastern Europe,

1.3 (a) (4)

This resultant net total of Soviet divisions, however, probably could not be increased materially because of logistical problems, dispersal required by the threat of

a/ General Norstad states: "With marginal ground force resources, air assistance, effective and continuing, is absolutely essential."

1.3 (a) (1) & (2)

[REDACTED]

nuclear operations, potentially hostile populations, vulnerability of the LOCs (particularly the rail net) to sabotage and air interdiction, and the restrictive geography of the European peninsula.

Consequently the ratio of superiority of (a) Soviet deployed divisions plus those readily deployable, over (b) NATO divisions on the line plus those which could be gotten on the line in time to be effective, would be substantially reduced by the contemplated NATO build-up. Any Soviet offensive action would thereby become proportionately more hazardous from the Soviet standpoint, (see Question 3) and NATO capabilities for any initiative would be increased.

QUESTION 10:

What is the estimated net gold cost per year of the movement of six divisions to Europe and what can be done to reduce it?

ANSWER:

The movement to Europe of six divisions (220,000 men) and the related readiness measures including the deployment to Europe of 28 tactical squadrons (26,000 men), if the movement took place between January 1 and March 1, 1962, would increase U. S. Defense expenditures overseas by \$350 million in FY'62 and \$760 million in FY'63. Of these sums \$250 and \$545 million respectively would be spent in Germany.

1.3(6)(3) + (6)

[REDACTED]

The suspension of movement of dependents to the European area which will take effect in October 1961, will benefit the U. S. balance of payments by \$10 million in FY'62 and \$100 million in FY'63. If all dependents now in Europe were returned to the U. S. before March 31, 1962, U. S. overseas expenditures would be reduced by approximately \$90 million in FY'62 and about \$300 million annually thereafter.

13(4)(5)

With reference to the total U. S. program, General Lemnitzer offered these general observations:

"Although there are deficiencies in the logistical field, we can, in my opinion, undertake effective military action. The magnitude of these logistic shortages is not sufficient to be considered a bar to taking the action required to meet the threat.

"An additional point which I wish to emphasize is that if NATO deploys 30 effective divisions on the central front and accelerates production of critical items and conventional ammunition, and if we also expand our organic depot repair and supply support activities as soon as possible, our resultant capabilities can far exceed that provided solely by the 30 divisions. Short of the Soviets initiating nuclear war, these forces would give us the capability to defend by sustained conventional operations for a sufficient period to allow for the build-up of the second echelon forces in Europe. This factor, taken in conjunction with the fact that there is a finite upper limit to the number of forces the USSR can effectively employ on the peninsula of Western Europe, convinces me that the West, with 30 divisions deployed in Central Europe, would be in a much better position to wage either nuclear or non-nuclear war than we are now. As a minimum, considerable additional time would be provided the President before he had to make the decision to initiate tactical nuclear war or general nuclear war.

"As an over-all observation, I believe that we must convey to our allies and the USSR an increased sense of urgency on our part. Substantive build-up and deployments along the lines outlined in the answers to the President's questions, if taken now or in the near future, should generate a commensurate build-up on the part of our Allies and should serve as a deterrent to the USSR making a grab in Berlin. This build-up would further our purposes both in Europe and world-wide. Taken in conjunction with other measures, the credibility of our over-all posture would be greatly enhanced, thereby lessening the chance that we

[REDACTED]

would have to use these forces in combat. Moreover, if the deterrent fails, our capability for successfully conducting combat operations, conventional or nuclear, would be substantially increased."

* * * *

[REDACTED] General Norstad's general comments on my answers to the questions are stated in Appendix A. [REDACTED]

Robert S. McVernon

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX A
(General Norstad's General Comments on the
Secretary of Defense's Answers to the Ten Questions)

1. I HAVE STUDIED YOUR PROPOSED ANSWERS TO THE TEN QUESTIONS WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO CALL TO ACTIVE DUTY FOUR NATIONAL GUARD DIVS. OUR RESPECTIVE REACTIONS TO THE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS POSED ARE CONDITIONED BY THE BASIC VIEWS WE HOLD, BOTH WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE NATO STRATEGY, AND TO THE MEASURES REQUIRED TO MEET THE CURRENT THREAT TO BERLIN AND ELSEWHERE. I BELIEVE THAT YOUR PAPER REFLECTS TO A LARGE DEGREE MY THOUGHTS ON THESE BROADER QUESTIONS. IT IS IN DEGREE RATHER THAN IN PRINCIPLE THAT OUR VIEWS MAY VARY. I HOPE THAT THE ANSWERS EVENTUALLY SUBMITTED WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH PRINCIPLE AND DETAIL. TO THIS END, I WILL FIRST OUTLINE MY VIEWS ON WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE BASIC ISSUES, SINCE THESE ARE LARGELY THE SOURCE OF THE RELATED SPECIFIC COMMENTS.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2. I FULLY APPRECIATE AND SUPPORT THE NEED TO CREATE A POSITION FROM WHICH WE WOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND, WITHIN REASONABLE LIMITS, TO ANY FORM OF SOVIET AGGRESSION IN THE NATO AREA, FORCEFULLY, BUT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF GENERAL WAR. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT REALISTIC PLANNING MUST SEEK TO EXPLOIT OUR STRENGTHS WITHOUT OVERLOOKING OUR WEAKNESSES; ABOVE ALL, IT MUST WEIGH IMMEDIATE NEEDS AGAINST INTERESTS OF THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE POSTURE OF THE WEST. WHILE PREPARING TO EXPLOIT ANY FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENTS, WE MUST NOT CONFUSE THE WISH WITH THE FACT. WE SHOULD THEREFORE CONSIDER, VERY CAREFULLY, OUR ABILITY TO ENFORCE A GRADUAL, CONTROLLED DEVELOPMENT OF THE BATTLE, AND NOT OVERESTIMATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE CAN DICTATE THE SOVIET RESPONSE, PARTICULARLY IN A SITUATION WHERE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT WE WOULD HAVE THE INITIATIVE. TO ASSUME THAT WE COULD EXERCISE INDEPENDENT, UNILATERAL CONTROL OVER THE BATTLE WOULD BE AS WRONG IN 1961 AS IT WAS WRONG IN 1953 TO SPEAK OF "A TIME AND PLACE OF OUR OWN CHOOSING."

3. BASED UPON THE PRINCIPLE THAT IT IS SOUND PRACTICE TO BE CONFIDENT IN EXECUTION BUT QUESTIONING AND CONCERNED IN PLANNING, I AM DISTURBED BY WHAT MAY BE OVER-OPTIMISM WITH RESPECT TO:

A. THE ALTERNATIVES THAT WILL, IN FACT, BECOME AVAILABLE TO USE BY MEASURES THAT ESSENTIALLY MEET FORCE GOALS PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED BY NATO AS THE MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR AN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF EUROPE, WITH NUCLEAR SUPPORT WHEN NECESSARY.

B. WHAT MORE WE CAN ACHIEVE, BECAUSE OF THE CONVENTIONAL FORCE BUILD-UP ENVISIONED, IN TERMS OF EITHER DETERRING SOVIET

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ACTION AGAINST OUR ACCESS ROUTES TO BERLIN, INDUCING THEM TO REOPEN ACCESS IF IT IS DENIED, OR ACTUALLY FORCING A REOPENING OF ACCESS AGAINST DETERMINED OPPOSITION.

C. OUR ABILITY TO DEFEND WESTERN EUROPE AGAINST A MASSIVE CONVENTIONAL ATTACK BY THE SOVIET BLOC FOR AS MUCH AS A MONTH OR MORE, WITHOUT HAVING TO RESORT TO THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

D. THE IMPACT OF THE MEASURES WHICH WE PROPOSE TO TAKE ON BOTH THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM EFFORTS OF OUR ALLIES.

4. OUR FORCE POSTURE SHOULD BE SUCH AS TO PERMIT US TO RESPOND TO THE WHOLE RANGE OF THE SOVIET THREAT. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE CREDIBILITY OF THE DETERRENT CAN BE DESTROYED BY EMPHASIZING A POLICY THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED BY THE SOVIETS AS PERMITTING THEM TO BECOME INVOLVED, AND THEN, IF THEY DECIDE THE RISKS ARE TOO GREAT, TO DISENGAGE. THAT THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A MISCONCEPTION IS EVIDENCED BY THE QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF SOME OF OUR ALLIES AS TO OUR CONCEPTS AND OUR POLICY. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE SOVIETS BE FORCED TO ACT AND MOVE AT ALL TIMES IN FULL AWARENESS THAT IF THEY USE FORCE THEY RISK GENERAL WAR WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

5. THE SOVIET CAPABILITY TO AUGMENT FORCES IN EUROPE IS CLEARLY GREATER THAN OURS. OUR BUILD-UP TO THE 30-DIVISION LEVEL WILL GREATLY INCREASE OUR FLEXIBILITY, EXTEND THE PERIOD OVER WHICH WE COULD DEFEND SUCCESSFULLY AND RAISE THE THRESHOLD AT WHICH NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD HAVE TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE

[REDACTED]

BATTLE. IT WILL NOT, HOWEVER, PROVIDE A REAL BASIS FOR ASSURANCE THAT WE COULD SUCCESSFULLY SUSTAIN A DEFENSE AGAINST MASSIVE CONVENTIONAL ATTACK FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. IT CERTAINLY WILL NOT PERMIT US TO CONSIDER CONDUCTING ANY MAJOR CONVENTIONAL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST DETERMINED SOVIET RESISTANCE.

6. WHILE NOT WISHING TO OVERESTIMATE SOVIET CAPABILITIES OR TO UNDERESTIMATE OUR OWN, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE SOVIETS MAY WELL START WITH SUPERIOR FORCES, WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE THE INITIATIVE AND WOULD ENJOY SUPERIORITY IN CONVENTIONAL AIR OPERATIONS FROM THE OUTSET. ASSUMING A NORMAL ALLIED COMBAT LOSS RATE, TO GAIN AND MAINTAIN AIR SUPERIORITY OVER WESTERN EUROPE PRESENTS A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THE ALLIANCE. UNDER THIS CONDITION, OUR CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES AND OUR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ATOMIC DEFENSE PLANS WOULD DETERIORATE QUICKLY.

7. LASTLY, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THE FACT THAT OUR NATO STRATEGY MUST BE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE TO OUR ALLIES IF THEY ARE TO HAVE EITHER THE WILL TO FACE UP TO POSSIBLE MILITARY OPERATIONS OR THE INCLINATION TO BUILD UP THEIR FORCES. UNREASONABLE AS SUCH AN INTERPRETATION WOULD BE, ANY POLICY WHICH MIGHT APPEAR TO SUGGEST TRADING LARGE AREAS OF EUROPE FOR TIME IN WHICH TO SEEK TO AVOID THE SPREAD OF WAR TO THE U.S. OR WHICH APPEARS TO DENY THE USE OF CAPABILITIES AND WEAPONS WHICH MIGHT DIVERT OR DESTROY THE SOVIET THREAT TO EUROPEAN LIVES AND TERRITORY, WILL HAVE HARD GOING. I AM SURE YOU AGREE THAT NOTHING WE DO SHOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR GOAL IS TO CONFINE THE FIGHT FOR ALLIED RIGHTS IN EUROPE TO EUROPE.

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[REDACTED]

1.3(a)(5)

[REDACTED]

8. I FULLY ENDORSE THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR CAPABILITIES AND OUR EFFORTS TO GET OUR ALLIES TO DO LIKEWISE. I HAVE ALWAYS ADVOCATED A POSTURE HERE IN EUROPE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE ACROSS THE FULL RANGE OF THREATS, AND THUS ONE WHICH MUST BE BASED UPON A BALANCE OF CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR FORCES.

[REDACTED]

1.3(a)(1)

34. WHERE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS APPEARS TO EXIST, IN MOST CASES IT SPRINGS FROM DIFFERING ESTIMATES AS TO THE EXTENT OF THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE PLANNED INCREASES IN MILITARY STRENGTH, NATIONAL AND NATO, AND OF THE DEGREE OF DEPENDENCE WE ARE WARRANTED IN PLACING ON THESE BENEFITS. THE STRENGTHENING OF NATO FORCES TO DEAL IN A FLEXIBLE MANNER WITH LESSER ACTS OF AGGRESSION AS WELL AS MEET MAJOR THREATS TO ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE IS BADLY NEEDED, AND IS LONG OVER-DUE. I HAVE ADVOCATED SUCH STRENGTHENING OF OUR CAPABILITY FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS. I SPECIFICALLY ENDORSE THE EARLY DEPLOYMENT OF THE PLANNED 40,000 U.S. TROOP AUGMENTATION IN EUROPE, THE PROPOSED INCREASE

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IN US STRATEGIC RESERVE CAPABILITIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUITABLE MEANS TO DEPLOY RAPIDLY THESE RESERVE FORCES.

25. IN THE LIGHT OF THE SITUATION EXISTING TODAY, I WOULD SUGGEST NO FURTHER DEPLOYMENT TO EUROPE UNTIL WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ABSORB EFFECTIVELY THE 40,000 AUGMENTATION NOW PLANNED. SHOULD THE POLITICAL OR MILITARY SITUATION CHANGE, AS IT MIGHT WELL DO OVER ANY 24-HOUR PERIOD, THE INITIAL OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE ON AN EXERCISE BASIS, SEVERAL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PLANNED. IN THIS WAY, A SUBSTANTIAL BUILD-UP COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT FREEZING US IN A "FOR THE DURATION" POSITION SO DESTRUCTIVE OF MILITARY AND POLITICAL FLEXIBILITY. IN CASE OF VERY SERIOUS DETERIORATION, THESE FORCES SHOULD BE MOVED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE.

(Note: Above paragraphs extracted from General Norstad's message of 16 September 1961).